

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 IO-10 EB-07 (ISO) W
----- 025716

R 211115Z JULY 75

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0512

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 0845

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PK, IN

SUBJECT: PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER'S VIEWS RE FLOODS

REF: A) LAHORE 834; B) LAHORE 840 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MY SHORT COURTESY CALL ON NEW PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER SADIQ HUSSAIN QURESHI MORNING JULY 21, HE OFFERED FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT REMARKS RE FLOOD SITUATION IN PAK PUNJAB (OTHER SUBJECTS SEPTTEL AND MEMCON).

2. WHEN I EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR HUMAN SUFFERING AND PHYSICAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY RECENT FLOODING, QURESHI OBSERVED THAT SITUATION HAD GIVEN HIS ADMINISTRATION RATHER INAUSPICIOUS START, BUT -- "MASHA'ALLAH" -- DANGER POINT APPEARED TO HAVE PASSED, AT LEAST FOR PRESENT. HOWEVER, HE HAD JUST RECEIVED DISQUIETING REPORT OF RENEWED RAINS IN SIALKOT DISTRICT AND HIS PEOPLE WERE KEEPING CLOSE WATCH. (LIGHT RAIN HAD ALSO BEGUN TO FALL IN LAHORE BUT ENDED MIDDAY.)

3. I COMMENDED CHIEF MINISTER ON HIS PERSONAL EFFORTS IN VISITING FLOOD AFFECTED AREAS AND DIRECTING RELIEF OPERATIONS,
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AND ON APPARENT EFFECTIVENESS OF WARNING AND RELIEF SYSTEMS THIS YEAR. HE REPLIED THAT WHILE "NOTHING REACHES PERFECTION," HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY IMPROVEMENTS IN BOTH WARNING AND RELIEF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH 1973. IN MOST CASES AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN ABLE TO WARN ENDANGERED VILLAGES 24-48 HOURS IN ADVANCE LAST WEEK.

4. TO MY SURPRISE, QURESHI THEN ASSERTED HE FELT HANDICAPPED IN CURRENT SITUATION BY DEARTH OF INFORMATION FROM INDIA ON RAINFALL IN CATCHMENT AREAS OF RIVERS UPSTREAM OF PAK BORDER, AND ON THEIR FLOW INTO PAKISTAN -- ESPECIALLY RAVI RIVER. HE CALIMED PAKISTAN WAS RECEIVING ONLY SKETCHY DATA FROM INDIA, SUCH AS FLOW OF 6-8 LAKH CUSECS (SIC.) AT MADHOPUR HEADWORKS ON RAVI IN INDIA JUST ABOVE JASSAR. ALTHOUGH INDIA TRIED TO TAKE OFF AS MUCH WATER AS POSSIBLE AT MADHOPUR, AMOUNT FLOWING TO PAKISTAN WAS NOT BEING REPORTED. LATTER, OF COURSE, WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO PAK FLOODWATCHERS. IF FLOW AT JASSAR EXCEEDED 1.7 LAKH CUSECS, SERIOUS FLOODING COULD OCCUR IN SIALKOT DISTRICT, LAHORE AND DOWNSTREAM.

5. I ASKED IF MECHANISM HAD NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED TO EXCHANGE SUCH INFORMATION. QURESHI REPLIED THAT SIMLA AGREEMENTS HAD PROVIDED FOR SUCH EXCHANGE BUT IT WAS NOT WORKING. HE ADDED THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD OBTAINED THEIR MOST USEFUL INFO FROM MONITORING INDIAN RADIO AND TV REPORTS, FROM WHICH THEY WERE ABLE TO BRACE THEMSELVES.

6. I TOOK OCCASION TO ASK CHIEF MINISTER'S APPROVAL OF OUR KEEPING IN TOUCH DIRECTLY WITH PUNJAB FLOOD RELIEF COMMISSIONER (WHO HAD BEEN STANDOFFISH LAST YEAR AS COMPARED WITH 1973). QURESHI READILY AGREED AND ISSUED ORDERS TO THAT EFFECT. CHIEF MINISTER CLOSED BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT AMERICANS WOULD HELP PROVIDE RELIEF SUPPLIES IF NEEDED THIS YEAR. I SAID I FELT SURE WE WOULD HELP WHERE WE COULD IN AN EMERGENCY, BUT REMINDED CHIEF MINISTER THAT FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE WAS COORDINATED BY CENTRAL CABINET DIVISION WITH UNDP RESREP IN ISLAMABAD (ISLAMABAD 6604). SPENGLER

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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